

# Visible Muslimness in Scotland: Between Discrimination and Integration

Bonino, Stefano

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## **Visible Muslimness in Scotland: between discrimination and integration**

*This paper casts light on the realities and perceptions of ethno-religious discrimination among Muslims in Scotland, with particular reference to those living in Edinburgh, during both everyday social interaction with the indigenous Scottish community and contact with police and security officers. Discrimination against ethnic minorities in Scotland can be traced back in history; however, it is its post-9/11 multifaceted form that has particularly targeted Muslims qua Muslims in a global climate of distrust and stigmatization. While publicly available statistics show a decrease in racist incidents in Scotland, findings from other studies illustrate a more complex situation, in which prejudice and discrimination intermingle in ways that make it hard to quantify the precise extent of anti-Muslim sentiments in Scotland. Qualitative data specifically collected in Edinburgh suggest that Muslims' hyper-visibility has triggered ethno-religious discrimination by some members of the non-Muslim majority. However, the daily experiences of life in Scotland, and the social relations with non-Muslims, are more heterogeneous and nuanced; they include overall positive views of, and a certain engagement with, many non-Muslims in a context of relative tolerance. Contact with police and security officers at airports constitute the main area of concern for Scottish Muslims, whose confidence, sense of equality and feelings of belonging to society is severely undermined by the securitization of their ethno-religious diversity. The path towards a pluralistic Scottishness rests on socio-political and institutional efforts to reduce the discrimination of visible diversity, especially at loci of security, and to include the symbolic and physical distinctiveness of Muslimness within Scottish porous cultural boundaries.*

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The Scottish context which Muslims inhabit has been characterized as an easier environment for Muslims to integrate in compared to England, due to less fear of terrorism, lower settlement numbers and the perceived positive attitudes of Scottish people (e.g.: friendliness, sociability and a welcoming disposition).<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in Scotland have benefited from the specific socio-historical settlement of

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<sup>1</sup> Amy Homes, Chris McLean and Lorraine Murray, *Muslim integration in Scotland* (British Council: Ipsos MORI Scotland 2010).

South Asian communities in Scotland, who did not compete for jobs with the majority Scottish people when working as peddlers in the mid-1920s and later when entering education and moving into self-employment, who privileged house ownership and, therefore, avoided competition for public services in the 1950s and 1960s, who have so far not created major troubles and whose involvement in business have helped promote a positive public image.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, in Scotland Anglophobia may displace Islamophobia,<sup>3</sup> in a context in which English people encounter barriers to belonging due to their national identities<sup>4</sup> and feed anxieties and insecurities among Scottish people.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the daily realities in which Scottish Muslims live are diverse, fluid and complex. In fact, such realities also includes prejudice and are colored by the insecurities that sustain the cultural barriers between Muslims and non-Muslims in a context in which the former might perceive the latter to hold more negative views of them than they do.<sup>6</sup> The differences between the two constituencies which host the two largest Muslim communities – Glasgow (42% of the total Scottish Muslim population) and Edinburgh (16% of the total Scottish Muslim population) – is a reminder of the rather dis-homogeneous and patchy experiences of being a Muslim in Scotland. On the one hand, Glasgow hosts the most ethnically segregated area in Scotland, i.e. Pollokshields, which is burdened with serious problems of discrimination and racism<sup>7</sup> and has become a distinctively Pakistani and Muslim place: shops have dual signs (English and Urdu), Asian clothes shops display mannequins dressed in *shalvar kameez* and there are beauty salons for women only.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, Edinburgh presents itself as a socio-economically and culturally distinctive town. Unlike Glasgow, Edinburgh's smaller, ethnically diverse, albeit of majority Pakistani origin or heritage, Muslim population is scattered throughout the town,<sup>9</sup> a socio-spatial element which might favor integration, if

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<sup>2</sup> Bashir Maan, *The new Scots: the story of Asians in Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Asifa Hussain and William Miller, *Multicultural nationalism: Islamophobia, Anglophobia, and devolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Ian McIntosh, Douglas Robertson and Duncan Sim, *English people in Scotland: an invisible minority* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press 2008).

<sup>5</sup> Ross Bond, Katharine Charsley and Sue Grundy, 'An audible minority: migration, settlement and identity among English graduates in Scotland', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 36, n. 3, 2010, 483–499.

<sup>6</sup> Homes, McLean and Murray, *Muslim integration in Scotland*, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> Peter Hopkins, 'Everyday racism in Scotland: a case study of East Pollokshields', *Scottish Affairs*, vol. 49, Autumn, 2004, 88–103.

<sup>8</sup> Asifa Siraj, 'Meanings of modesty and the hijab amongst Muslim women in Glasgow, Scotland', *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, vol. 18, n. 6, 2011, 716–731.

<sup>9</sup> Older research confirms this element but also points out that some Muslim families are clustered within certain areas of Edinburgh (e.g. Leith and Tollcross), albeit not to the extent of concentration that takes place in Glasgow and in English cities such as Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester, Middlesbrough and some parts of London. See Ali Wardak, 'The mosque and social control in Edinburgh's Muslim community', *Culture and Religion: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, vol. 3, n. 1, 2002, 201–219.

contact theory<sup>10</sup> – ‘the greater the familiarity, the lower the level of prejudice’<sup>11</sup> – holds true. The community gathers around eleven known mosques, which tend to serve different ethno-cultural and religious sub-divisions of the Muslim community, although many people attend the main city mosque, which is located in the central, student area and is a symbolic reminder of the key role that Islam plays in the social geography of contemporary Western societies.

This paper will mix existing Scottish data, studies and literatures on discrimination towards Muslims<sup>12</sup> with qualitative data specifically collected in Edinburgh between 2011 and 2013 through interviews with thirty-nine Muslims<sup>13</sup> and participation in a public *Stop and Search Consultation Meeting* in order to unearth understandings, perceptions and experiences of discrimination among Scottish Muslims.<sup>14</sup> The community was accessed through two very different mosques. One is an ethnically diverse and international mosque attracting a variegated pool of Muslims and is located in central Edinburgh. The other one is a Pakistani mosque catering for an ethno-culturally tight-knit community of older generation Muslims. The pool of respondents represented a collective body of diverse voices within the Muslim community who differed with regard to their ethnicity, gender, age, social class and length of residence in Edinburgh. Most respondents (about two-thirds) were of South Asian background or heritage.<sup>15</sup> The remaining respondents were Middle Eastern, African, British mixed, Scottish, and so on. Twenty-seven respondents were male and twelve were female. About half of the respondents were between 20 and 39 years of age and the other half was within the 40-60+ age group. Particularly those in the 20-39 age group, and generally slightly more than half of the total sample, were from a middle or upper-middle social class, while the remaining participants were from the working and lower classes.<sup>16</sup> Participants had different

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<sup>10</sup> Gordon Allport, *The nature of prejudice* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books 1954).

<sup>11</sup> Clive Field, ‘Islamophobia in contemporary Britain: the evidence of the opinion polls, 1988–2006’, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, vol. 18, n. 4, 2007, 447–477 (465).

<sup>12</sup> South Asian (also indicated as ‘Asian’) will be used as a proxy for Muslim whenever religion is not recorded by statistics and/or studies. However, it needs to be noticed that this categorization is problematic as it also includes significant populations of Sikhs and Hindus (who might be discriminated against for either being Sikh / Hindu or for being wrongly believed to be Muslim). This is a limitation to studies on discrimination against Muslims which has to be considered.

<sup>13</sup> All names have been suitably anonymized to ensure confidentiality.

<sup>14</sup> This paper only presents a section of data springing from a broader study on Muslims in Scotland which focused on four main themes: identity, community, integration and discrimination. Similarly, the observational element of this paper is limited but is more extensive in the broader study where it includes attendance at two local mosques, a Muslim student society, charity activities, interfaith events, demonstrations, and so on. Pending further publications, some other elements of the study (especially on identity) can be found in Stefano Bonino, ‘Scottish Muslims through a decade of change: wounded by the stigma, healed by Islam, rescued by Scotland’, *Scottish Affairs*, vol. 24, n. 1, 2015, 78–105.

<sup>15</sup> Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian and Scottish or British Pakistani.

<sup>16</sup> This assessment needs to be taken cautiously as it is an educated guess mostly based upon educational qualifications and occupation.

experiences of settlement in Scotland and their length of residence in Edinburgh varied too, from as little as three years to as long as their entire life. Interviews were semi-structured and aimed to gather Muslims' (both positive and negative) experiences and perceptions of life in Scotland, with a particular focus on the post-9/11 period. While there are limitations with regard to the generalizability of research conducted in Edinburgh to the wider Scottish Muslim population, the broader range of academic and non-academic sources utilized in this paper will help address some issues of representativeness and cast light on ethno-religious discrimination among Muslims in Scotland.

After tracing the history of discriminatory attitudes towards visible minorities and, more recently, Muslims in Scotland, the focus will be cast on Muslims' experiences and perceptions of discrimination directed towards their ethnicity and religion in interaction with both the non-Muslim Scottish population and with police and security officers at airports. It will be shown that discrimination during interactions with non-Muslims is strongly connected to Muslims' hyper-visibility in a global, post-9/11 climate of socio-political stigmatization. However, the daily experiences of life in Scotland, and the social relations with non-Muslims, tend to include overall positive views of, and a certain level of engagement with, the majority of non-Muslims in a context of relative local tolerance. It is the relationship between Muslims and police and security officers at *loci* of security (i.e. airports) which predominantly colors Muslims' sense of social inequality and non-belonging and feelings of anger and humiliation in a power imbalanced space. The paper will conclude with some remarks over the potential for Scotland, and particularly Edinburgh, to foster a pluralistic and inclusive Scottishness, which can integrate the heterogeneous ethno-religious distinctiveness of Muslim communities within its fluid cultural boundaries, provided that the perceived and experienced discrimination of Muslims *qua* Muslims, especially at airports, were drastically reduced.

## **A historical overview of ethno-religious discrimination in Scotland**

Exclusionary practices based on racialized stereotypes against colored people have been reproduced in Scotland since the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries: once fostered by tales of missionaries and Scottish soldiers returning from India and Africa; then exemplified by color bans in dancing halls in the 1920s; and nowadays expressed through direct or indirect discrimination in various spheres of life, e.g. employment, housing and socio-cultural entertainments.<sup>17</sup> As Dunlop<sup>18</sup> notices, opposition to the employment of Indian lascars

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<sup>17</sup> Ali Wardak, *Social control and deviance: a South Asian community in Scotland* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2000).

emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century within the industry labor sector and triggered national fears about a cheap colonial workforce that was perceived to lower the rates of pay of white British sailors. This opposition, exclusionary and racist in terms, against Indian (and Chinese) seamen increased both before the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 and after its end in 1918, when competition in the labor market intensified as a result of the global collapse of the shipping industry. Riots exploded in 1919 in many British ports, including Glasgow.

A ‘color problem’ subsequently emerged in the late 1920s and early 1930s throughout Britain and Scotland and included anti-colored labor campaigns promoted by the National Union of Seaman.<sup>19</sup> Generally, in that period ‘there were accumulative movements to perceive Indian lascars and other Colonial seamen as a constant “threat” and a potential “problem” primarily on grounds of negative associations of skin colour.’<sup>20</sup> The idea that Indian workers would take jobs from the white majority and favor wage reductions during periods of recession became socially widespread and put Indians at the same level as Irish, Lithuanian and Polish workers. Dunlop<sup>21</sup> argues that hostility and resentment over the employment of Indian labor intensified and took a further dimension – that is, one that: a) questioned the morals of Indian workers; b) assessed the threat that Indian workers posed to the population; and c) racialized the issue over the employment of Indian workers. Before and during the Second World War, Indian seamen in Scotland and, more broadly, in Great Britain fought to achieve better wages, in labor conditions that were highly disadvantageous compared to white seamen, who would earn about eight times more.

Moving on to over 30 years after the Second World War, a study conducted in the 1980s<sup>22</sup> shows a fairly widespread pattern of racial harassment directed towards Asians in Glasgow. It also argues that episodes of racism against Asians had been recorded in Scotland since the 1970s. In this particular study, around 36% of Asians experienced violence, threats or harassment, ranging from verbal abuse to personal attacks and attacks on the home. The authors maintain that such episodes had been widely under-reported due to a lack of confidence in the authorities and the police, who seemed to underestimate racial harassment.

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<sup>18</sup> Anne Dunlop, ‘Lascars and labourers: reactions to the Indian presence in the West of Scotland during the 1920s and 1930s’, *Scottish Labour History Society Journal*, vol. 25, 1990, 40–57.

<sup>19</sup> Marika Sherwood, ‘Lascars in Glasgow and the West of Scotland during World War II’, *Scottish Labour History Society Journal*, vol. 38, 2003, 37–50.

<sup>20</sup> Dunlop, ‘Lascars and labourers’, *op. cit.*, 46.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Alison Bowes, Jacqui McCluskey and Duncan Sim, ‘Racism and harassment of Asians in Glasgow’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 13, n. 1, 1990, 71–91.

Miles and Dunlop<sup>23</sup> notice that in the 1980s racist attacks started being reported by Asian and other minority groups, especially in Glasgow. Also, the British National Party, the National Front and similar fascist organizations emerged and were involved in printing fascist newspapers and organizing political rallies. Such political organizations ‘link the much longer tradition of anti-Catholicism with a racism which focuses on the Asian presence.’<sup>24</sup> As a consequence of the ongoing process of racialization, Asian communities started gathering in more self-conscious political organizations, such as the Scottish Asian Action Committee and the Minority Ethnic Teachers Association, aimed at ‘seeking action to deal with racism and patterns of exclusion and calling for direct Asian participation in decision-making.’<sup>25</sup> Episodes of racial harassment against Pakistanis in Edinburgh in the late 1980s and early 1990s have been recorded in Wardak’s work.<sup>26</sup> Hopkins<sup>27</sup> also provides some examples of notable racist incidents in pre-9/11 Scotland (mainly Glasgow), including the murder of a young Asian boy, tensions between the police and the ethnic community and racist events promoted by the British National Party.

Following the Rushdie Affair in 1989, Muslims across Great Britain started mobilizing, being recognized and being targeted not only as an ethnic group, but especially as a religious group.<sup>28</sup> In the wake of 9/11, Scottish Muslims, who today account for 1.4% of the total Scottish population,<sup>29</sup> became the main representatives of ethnic heterogeneous, but perceived religious homogeneous, diversity within the Scottish landscape, a fate that they share with fellow Muslims south of the border. Clegg and Rosie argue that ‘the attack on the World Trade Centre in September 2001 marked a turning point from predominantly racial intolerance and abuse towards more religiously motivated attacks. People wearing distinctive religious dress or symbols are a particular target.’<sup>30</sup> In the same study, Muslims were perceived by all faith groups as the community most under pressure, especially after 9/11. Among the targets of the post-9/11 retaliation are also members of other ethnic and religious

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<sup>23</sup> Robert Miles and Anne Dunlop ‘Racism in Britain: the Scottish dimension’, in Peter Jackson (ed.), *Race and racism: essays in social geography* (London: Allen and Unwin 1987), 119–141.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>26</sup> Wardak, *Social Control and Deviance*, *op. cit.*

<sup>27</sup> Hopkins, ‘Everyday racism in Scotland’, *op. cit.*

<sup>28</sup> Marta Bolognani, *Crime and Muslim Britain: race, culture and the politics of criminology among British Pakistanis* (London: Tauris Academic Studies 2009); Gabriele Marranci, *The anthropology of Islam* (Oxford: Berg 2008).

<sup>29</sup> National Records of Scotland, *2011 Census: key results on population, ethnicity, identity, language, religion, health, housing and accommodation in Scotland – release 2A* (Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland 2013).

<sup>30</sup> Cecilia Clegg and Michael Rosie, *Faith communities and local government in Glasgow* (Edinburgh: Scottish Executive 2005), 1-2.

minority groups (e.g. Sikh) who might be mistakenly considered Muslim.<sup>31</sup> Hopkins and Smith<sup>32</sup> offer details of attacks on Muslim symbols, such as a mosque in Edinburgh being vandalized less than a month after the terrorist attacks on the USA: damages were valued at £20,000. The two authors document other post-9/11 episodes of vandalism and attacks, such as eggs being thrown at a mosque and a Muslim woman being spat on in a Glasgow street. Qureshi<sup>33</sup> also reports an episode of vandalism against a mosque and a serious attack on a young Scottish Pakistani man in Edinburgh after the London bombings in 2005.

On the one hand, a number of Scottish people believe that the attempted bombing of Glasgow Airport in July 2007 increased intolerance towards Muslims.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, almost half of Scottish people seem to believe that Scotland would lose its identity if the Muslim population increased, while 37% consider Islam incompatible with Scottish life.<sup>35</sup> Kidd and Jamieson<sup>36</sup> confirm the fact that global events have triggered episodes of racial and religious discrimination. This is considered to be ‘a double burden’ since ‘Muslims experience unfair treatment and discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity and race, as well as in relation to their religious identity.’<sup>37</sup> They also notice that unfriendliness and hostility towards Muslims have been fairly common in Muslims’ areas of residence and on the street, while women have reported intrusive attention from men or sexual harassment.

On the other hand, Scotland has supported anti-racist movements and has come out with clear political statements against the Scottish Defence League, which has not built as strong of a support as the English Defence League has in England.<sup>38</sup> The weaknesses of the Scottish Defence League are rooted in a historical absence of a strong fascist tradition<sup>39</sup> and in a context where, despite the emergence of fascist organizations as mentioned above, ‘when fascist parties based in England have attempted to organise in Scotland since 1945, they have

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<sup>31</sup> Karen Qureshi, ‘Shifting proximities: news and “belonging-security”’, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 10, n. 3, 2007, 294–310.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Hopkins and Susan Smith, ‘Scaling segregation: racialising fear’, in Rachel Pain and Susan Smith (eds), *Fear: critical geopolitics and everyday life* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2008), 103–116.

<sup>33</sup> Qureshi, ‘Shifting proximities’, *op. cit.*

<sup>34</sup> Homes, McLean and Murray, *Muslim integration in Scotland*, *op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Sara Kidd and Lynn Jamieson, *Experiences of Muslims living in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Scottish Executive 2011).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>38</sup> Ruari Sutherland, “‘The Scottish hate us more than the Muslims...’: the North/South divide? A comparative analysis of the agenda, activities and development of the English and Scottish Defence Leagues”, *Reinvention: A Journal of Undergraduate Research*, British Conference of Undergraduate Research 2012 Special Issue. Available online at: <http://www.warwick.ac.uk/go/reinventionjournal/issues/bcur2012specialissue/sutherland> (viewed 11 April 2014).

<sup>39</sup> Robert Miles and Lesley Muirhead, ‘Racism in Scotland: a matter for further investigation?’, in David McCrone (ed.), *The Scottish Government Yearbook 1986* (Edinburgh: Unit for the Study of Government in Scotland, University of Edinburgh 1986), 108–136.



tended to agitate upon the “Irish question.”<sup>40</sup> In this sense religious sectarianism, which makes it difficult to build support among football casuals (who are the Defence Leagues’ main targets for recruitment) and a quasi-Anglophobic reaction to the overt Englishness of the English Defence League<sup>41</sup> may have hampered the growth of the Scottish Defence League. Within a promising socio-political and cultural context in which 77% of Scottish people consider themselves not to be racist at all,<sup>42</sup> recent figures on racist incidents give hope for the future. In fact, statistics recorded a 14% decrease in racist incidents in 2012/2013 (4628) compared to 2011/2012 (5389)<sup>43</sup> and appeared in line with a downward trend seen since 2006/2007.<sup>44</sup> However, Pakistanis (23%, i.e. 1155) and Bangladeshis (1%, i.e. 43) still constituted 24% (1198) of victims of racism and contributed towards 41% of the total population of wider Asian origin (Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani and Other Asian) who had been victimized across the country. Edinburgh stood in second place with a mean of 19 racist incidents against a mean of 8.7 for every 10,000 people in the country.<sup>45</sup> Edinburgh was in second place, after Glasgow, also in previous reports, which considered the aggregate number of racist incidents recorded between 2004/2005 and 2009/2010.<sup>46</sup> Religiously aggravated offences for conduct derogatory towards Islam under Section 74 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003 oscillated between 2010 and 2014 but the number of charges (between 15 and 80 each year) is too low for the data to be of statistical significance.<sup>47</sup>

Issues of under-reporting and the problematic nature of disentangling religion from race and ethnicity make it hard to provide an accurate picture of anti-Muslim sentiments. While it is true that discrimination against Muslims still exists, it is also true that Scotland has the potential to foster positive engagement between its Muslim and non-Muslim population. The next section will present qualitative data collected in Edinburgh to illustrate how Muslims’ visible ethno-religious diversity has triggered the stigmatization and discrimination of a minority of the non-Muslim population in a broader context in which, however,

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>41</sup> Sutherland, ““The Scottish hate us more than the Muslims...”, *op. cit.*

<sup>42</sup> Scottish Executive, *One Scotland many cultures 2005/06 – waves 6 and 7 campaign evaluation* (Edinburgh: Scottish Executive 2006).

<sup>43</sup> Scottish Government, *Racist incidents recorded by the police in Scotland, 2011–12* (Scottish Government Statistical Bulletin 2012).

<sup>44</sup> Scottish Government, *Racist incidents recorded by the police in Scotland, 2012–13* (Scottish Government Statistical Bulletin 2013). This follows a wider trend of decreasing crime rates in Scotland: see Scottish Government, *Recorded crime in Scotland 2012–13* (Scottish Government Statistical Bulletin 2013).

<sup>45</sup> Scottish Government, *Racist incidents recorded by the police in Scotland, 2012–13*, *op. cit.*

<sup>46</sup> Scottish Government, *Racist incidents recorded by the police in Scotland, 2009–2010* (Scottish Government Statistical Bulletin 2011).

<sup>47</sup> Scottish Government, *Religiously aggravated offending in Scotland 2013–14* (Scottish Government Social Research 2014).

Muslimness (here understood in the heterogeneous ways in ‘being Muslim’) appears to be relatively tolerated and to be positively mobilized in interaction with Scottish society.

## **Edinburgh’s Muslims’ experiences and perceptions of visible diversity in everyday Scottish life**

A consistent pattern observed throughout fieldwork with Muslims in Edinburgh related to the ways in which their distinctive body markers and visible ‘signs of Muslimness’ (e.g.: skin color, beard, traditional clothes and *hijab*)<sup>48</sup> may position them within an *a priori* stigmatized group. This means that the public display of negatively perceived cultural diversity could class Muslims as ‘discredited’ individuals through mere visual contact (e.g.: seeing a colored man who wears a long beard or a woman who wears a *hijab*) and without requiring communication to establish such diversity.<sup>49</sup> In this sense, the essentialization of Muslimness could preclude the use of front stage techniques of self-presentation<sup>50</sup> that would otherwise help Muslims positively negotiate their multiple identities across different socio-cultural spaces, ease interactions with non-Muslims and define their own social positioning on a more equal level. The way in which signs, or visible markers, of Muslimness can cast Muslims outside the realm of socially power-balanced relationships and accepted cultural boundaries due to the symbolic power of race and religion to signal social differences was also identified by Hopkins<sup>51</sup> in his study on Scottish Pakistanis in the early 2000s and broadly follows other British<sup>52</sup> and European<sup>53</sup> studies on the subject. Kyriakides, Virdee and Modood’s research in Glasgow<sup>54</sup> further promotes the idea that when people only display ‘foreign Muslim signs’ (extensively including foreign accents and non-mainstream mannerisms too), these are

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<sup>48</sup> While many of the respondents who took part in this research’s qualitative fieldwork displayed at least one ‘sign of Muslimness’, it is true that not all Muslims in the general population do, e.g. those Muslims who have white or light-brown skins or carry no distinguishable visible markers of their faith. Also, some of such ‘signs of Muslimness’ might not identify one’s faith, but ethnicity or culture, and therefore could be wrongly assigned to people (e.g. Sikhs, Hindus, etc.) who are not Muslim. This is demonstrated by the fact that, for example, Sikhs are stopped and searched by the police upon belief that they are Muslim. See Alpa Parmar, ‘Stop and search in London: counter-terrorist or counter-productive?’, *Policing and Society: An International Journal of Research and Policy*, vol. 21, n. 4, 2011, 369–382.

<sup>49</sup> Erving Goffman, *Stigma: notes on the management of spoiled identity* (London: Penguin Books 1990/1963).

<sup>50</sup> Erving Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life* (London: Penguin Books 1990/1959).

<sup>51</sup> Hopkins, ‘Everyday racism in Scotland’, *op. cit.*

<sup>52</sup> Basia Spalek, ‘Hate crimes against British Muslims in the aftermath of September 11th’, *Criminal Justice Matters*, vol. 48, 1, 2002, 20–21; Chris Allen, ‘Exploring the impact of Islamophobia on visible Muslim women victims: a British case study’, *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, vol. 3, n. 2, 2014, 137–159.

<sup>53</sup> Tufyal Choudhury, Mohammed Aziz, Duaa Izzidien, Intissar Khreeji and Dilwar Hussain, *Perceptions of discrimination and Islamophobia: voices from members of Muslim communities in the European Union* (Vienna: European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia 2006).

<sup>54</sup> Christopher Kyriakides, Satnam Virdee and Tariq Modood, ‘Racism, Muslims and the national imagination’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 35, n. 2, 2009, 289–308.

perceived to be culturally problematic. However, the authors argue that when people utilize hybridised codes of cultural belonging, which resort upon both Scottish (e.g. command of English and Scottish accent)<sup>55</sup> and Muslim cultural norms, they can make claims of national belonging and be more easily included within society. This research builds upon the findings of such studies and takes them forward by showing the multidimensional nature of Muslim hyper-visibility as both a trigger for ethno-religious discrimination and a catalyst for positive interest in, and support of, post-9/11 Muslimness. Ghedi, a Somali man, encapsulated the reality of being a member of a visible minority, particularly a Muslim in the post-9/11 world, and the shift between a racial to an ethno-religious understanding and stigmatization of his identity:

Being a Muslim in Edinburgh has been difficult compared to back home. Over there, the majority of people are Muslim so it 'forces' you to be a Muslim. Here, Muslims are a minority and there is a minority issue. For example, people define Muslims by how you dress. If you are a Muslim man and you wear a *shalvar kameez*, it says that you are a Muslim even before you talk. If you wear a turban, again it is the same thing. If you have a beard, that is again the same thing. At the beginning, Muslims were treated as a racial group: people would say to you 'Paki', as it happened to me a number of times. Then, 9/11 changed things. If you have a beard and wear a *khamis*, they call you 'Bin Laden'. (Ghedi, Somali man in his mid-50s)

Leaving aside *loci* of security and interactions with the police for now, the workplace and the job market appeared to be areas of concern, since visibly presenting oneself as a Muslim was perceived as a potentially detrimental factor in both reaching certain positions and securing a job. A few respondents mentioned the absence of, if not the impossibility for society to even conceive, Muslims in positions of power (e.g. director or chief executive at the NHS, Prime Minister, etc.) due to the very essence of them being visibly Muslim. Others argued that they have to work harder to reach the same goals that non-Muslims achieve. People like Akhtar and Alena in the extracts below illustrate their perceptions that Muslims' stigmatized ethno-religious identity and visible diversity play against their chances of obtaining ordinary jobs:

I think that sometimes, even if you have the best qualifications out there, they say that you do not get a job because you are not what they are looking for or

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<sup>55</sup> See also Satnam Virdee, Christopher Kyriakides and Tariq Modood, 'Codes of cultural belonging: racialised national identities in a multi-ethnic Scottish neighbourhood', *Sociological Research Online*, vol. 11, n. 4, 2006.

they tell you a simple excuse that can be applicable to anyone. However, because of the ways things are, I would not be chosen because I am Pakistani, because I am Muslim. It is not necessarily right to do it but I do not blame it either. This is because of the ways the media perceive Islam, the way in which things have been done. (Akhtar, Scottish Pakistani man in his early 20s)

Looking for jobs was a big hit for me. I could not help thinking that the *hijab* was the way you do not get jobs and I do not like to think that way but felt like that I was forced to think about it that way. I was also trying to tell myself that there is something about me that is not right for this job and not the *hijab* and all the rest but I also thought about the *hijab*. I was fine on paper, I used to get lots of interviews for jobs, but then I would go for the interview and would never get the job. I think because my name is Alena and they think I am okay but when they meet me everything changes. (Alena, Palestinian woman in her late 20s)

A number of predominantly male interviewees displaying markers of Muslimness, such as Arif, Babar, Ghedi, Mustafa and Yasir experienced verbal abuse (e.g. being called ‘terrorist’ and ‘Paki’) by people on the streets, which happened to be the location with the highest number of general racist incidents occurring between 2004/2005 and 2009/2010.<sup>56</sup> Respondents connected such abuses with both the post-9/11 political and media negative portrayal of Muslimness and the low exposure to ethno-religious diversity which characterizes a small number of Scottish people. A few respondents also mentioned a few more serious incidents:

I got eggs thrown at my house. Here in Edinburgh you get called ‘Paki’ routinely on the streets, but mainly at night – not in the day. This year a Pakistani colleague of mine, on the very day that he arrived in Edinburgh, in three or four hours of arriving, he was assaulted on Nicolson Street during daytime. That was within three or four hours. Probably that could happen anywhere, it could happen in England, it could happen in America, probably even more, but I think that everybody here does have an experience. (Arif, Canadian Bangladeshi man in his early 30s)

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<sup>56</sup> Scottish Government, *Racist incidents recorded by the police in Scotland, 2009–2010*, *op. cit.*

Other similarly serious incidents involved a female respondent having her *hijab* pulled off on the street and a mosque being vandalized in the aftermath of 9/11. Respondents did not report many other episodes of vandalism and physical attacks. However, it might be that some people were not willing to share such experiences, possibly due to the strong emotional and psychological traumas that these might have caused them or because of the fact that a section of the Muslim population, often members of the older generations, might live in denial of racism and discrimination, as argued by a few younger interviewees and as reported by Maan.<sup>57</sup> While the incidence of serious episodes of discrimination in Edinburgh is unclear, this study found that visibly displaying a Muslim identity might negatively impact on relations with a minority of non-Muslims who target Muslimness with a variety of discriminatory weapons, from cultural prejudice to physical attacks. While the scale of this problem is unclear, ethno-religious discrimination, even when it results only in a few minor individual incidents, appears to take an emotional and psychological toll on Muslims.

At the other end of the spectrum, the post-9/11 context might have also provided Muslims with an important platform for recognition and positive engagement with the Scottish non-Muslim majority. Not only catalysts of discrimination and prejudice, visible projections of Muslim identities have also enticed positive reactions from the non-Muslim majority and interest towards Islamic beliefs and practices:

Six months into my volunteering job, I started wearing the *hijab*. People did not question me or anything. They looked at me once and thought ‘oh, she is wearing the *hijab*’ but did not ask why I started wearing it or that kind of thing. It was quite nice because during those days *Ramadan* was happening and they would ask me information about it. They would not ask me questions when I used not to wear the *hijab*. I thought that it was very good. I could tell them about my religion. (Adila, Kenyan Pakistani woman in her mid-40s)

Other respondents, such as Alena, noticed that, following 9/11, Islam positively caught the attention of many people, who started showing a curious and interested disposition in learning the principles underpinning Islam. This suggests that some members of the non-Muslim Scottish community are not simply buying into the negative portrayals offered by the mass media but take a more independent stance towards their Muslims fellow citizens:

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<sup>57</sup> Maan, *The new Scots*, *op. cit.*

If you look at 9/11 from the bright side, more and more people are asking about Islam, finding out more about Islam. Islam is the fastest-growing religion, so there must be a reason for that. In a way 9/11 was a sad incident but something good is coming out of that, although this does not mean that I want more 9/11s to happen! If your attitude is positive, things will change for the better. (Alena, Palestinian woman in her late 20s)

The general relationship between Edinburgh's Muslims and non-Muslims emerges as being colored by good levels of social interest in exploring and understanding Islam which can be enticed by the power of visible symbols of Muslimness. While some respondents noticed how such symbols can be a trigger for ethno-religious discrimination, others showed how they can also serve as a cure insofar as they allow to promote religious, ethnic and cultural diversity and, in the end, the social integration of Muslim distinctiveness within Scottish territories. More broadly, despite the existence of grass-roots practices of stigmatization of, and discriminatory attacks towards, Muslims in Edinburgh by some members of the Scottish majority, many research participants reported rather positive encounters with non-Muslims at various levels of social engagement. Positive comments on the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims were widespread and represented a body of collective voices that framed negative incidents around wider interconnected problems of low educational achievement, poor social skills and alcohol abuse. Below is a sample of interview extracts that point to such a direction:

Generally speaking, I think that non-Muslims are very positive. I have lived here for ten years and have come across just three or four times in which someone said something to me because I am a Muslim woman. That is all. Those comments came most of the time from someone who was drunk or uneducated. (Nyanath, Sudanese woman in her mid-30s)

I have a good relationship with non-Muslims. I used to have my own shop, a takeaway shop, I worked on catering so I had contact with a lot of non-Muslims. We get along fine. Most of my customers are non-Muslims and are very nice. (Anis, Tunisian man in his late 50s)

I think that the attitude of non-Muslims towards Muslims is very good. I work [in a hotel] with Spanish people, there are also Scottish people and English people there. There is no difference. Wherever you go – hospitals or the police

station – non-Muslims behave very well towards us. They try to help us.  
(Imran, Pakistani man in his mid-30s)

Whether myth or reality, the perception of Scotland, and particularly Edinburgh,<sup>58</sup> as a tolerant, friendly and socio-geographically inclusive place characterized a number of responses, which often negatively contrasted with life experiences and/or views of England. While negative feelings towards England were by no means shared by all respondents, many people attached themselves to a Scottish narrative of nationalism which may have been influenced by the political and media clamor over independence and in a context in which predominantly young generations of Muslims are strongly affiliated to their Scottish identities:<sup>59</sup>

I think that Scottish people are more tolerant. They hate the English more than the Asians! [...] Edinburgh is more tolerant, also for Asians. The school experience here has been much better than in England. And the religious element is more tolerated here. (Zakir, British Pakistani man in his mid-40s)

I have not spent time in England but I am really glad that I am Scottish. I really am! I do think that here we are better off than anywhere else in the UK. Basically, I think that Edinburgh has the right balance between the amount of Muslims and the amount of non-Muslims. Whereas, in other places where there are far too many Pakistanis you have troubles. For example in Bradford and places like that, they have got issues. (Rabab, Scottish Pakistani woman in her late 20s)

Mutual engagement with the non-Muslim community was also positively reported, especially due to the vibrant and cultured nature of Edinburgh, ‘a metropolitan meeting place for different ethnic traditions’<sup>60</sup> and home to the Fringe Festival and other socio-cultural events that can sensitize the population to ethno-religious diversity. Open-door days at mosques, the Islamic Festival during the Fringe Festival, events organized by the University of Edinburgh and other local interfaith organizations are all constant occasions for Muslims and non-

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<sup>58</sup> The less positive experiences of Muslims in Glasgow can be found in Peter Hopkins’ work.

<sup>59</sup> Hopkins, ‘Everyday racism in Scotland’, *op. cit.*; Peter Hopkins, “‘Blue squares”, “proper” Muslims and transnational networks: narratives of national and religious identities amongst young Muslim men living in Scotland’, *Ethnicities*, vol. 7, n. 1, 2007, 61–81; Amir Saeed, Neil Blain and Douglas Forbes, ‘New ethnic and national questions in Scotland: post-British identities among Glasgow Pakistani teenagers’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 22, n. 5, 2001, 821–844.

<sup>60</sup> Karen Qureshi and Shaun Moores, ‘Identity remix: tradition and translation in the lives of young Pakistani Scots’, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 2, n. 3, 1999, 311–330 (327).

Muslims to gather together, mix up and improve their mutual understanding. This may well confirm the link between friendly and positive inter-ethnic contact and people's positive views of, and attitudes towards, different ethnicities.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, non-Muslims have often sided with Muslims, for example at pro-Palestine marches or at a counter-demonstration in response to the Scottish Defence League. In such and other occasions (e.g. in the wake of 9/11, after the Woolwich attack, etc.), the police, who had been harshly criticized for their activities at airports (see the next two sections), joined forces in supporting the Muslim community by: giving advice to mosques; protecting Muslims; offering their support and visible presence; and working towards the reduction of community tensions. As the respondent below argues, many of the global 'Muslim causes' attracted more supporters from the non-Muslim community than from the Muslim community:

Most of the time when you see protests of the EDL [English Defence League] or the SDL [Scottish Defence League], you see non-Muslims who are representing Muslims, supporting Muslims or staying on the side of Muslims. At the same time, you have Muslims who fight for justice. We have so many protests against the foreign policies of Israel and America. During pro-Palestine protests most of the time you see more non-Muslims than Muslims there. (Yasir, young Pakistani man in his mid-20s)

To sum up, aside from airports, which will be discussed in the next two sections, the collective body of Muslim experiences and perceptions of daily interactions with the non-Muslim majority is framed around overall positive relations which are, however, negatively affected by the stigmatization and discrimination that a minority of Scottish people carry out against visible projections of Muslimness. Arguably, Muslim ethno-religious diversity in Scotland has triggered a post-9/11 process of otherization. At the same time, it has offered Muslims a platform to further their engagement with broader society within a context, Edinburgh, which appears to be generally positive and welcoming.<sup>62</sup> Yet, a particular strain seems to have been placed on Edinburgh's Muslims during contact with police and security officers; not on streets or in other places of everyday life, but at airports. Airports, as the post-9/11 symbolical and physical embodiment of the stigmatization of visible Muslimness, have deeply impacted on Muslims' social confidence and sense of belonging and equality. The

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<sup>61</sup> Hidde Bekhuis, Stijn Ruiter and Marcel Coenders, 'Xenophobia among youngsters: the effect of inter-ethnic contact', *European Sociological Review*, vol. 29, n. 2, 2013, 229–242.

<sup>62</sup> Bonino, 'Scottish Muslims through a decade of change', *op. cit.*



next two sections will contextualize this specific problem within broader Britain and Scotland and present findings from fieldwork conducted in Edinburgh.

## Securitizing and policing Muslimness after 9/11

Within a wider national context of post-9/11 socio-political stigmatization of Muslimness,<sup>63</sup> in which Muslims have emerged as a ‘suspect community’,<sup>64</sup> stops and searches at airports and on streets have targeted British Muslims through the use of Schedule 7<sup>65</sup> and now-repealed Section 44<sup>66</sup> of the Terrorism Act 2000 and other terrorism legislation. Academic research shows that ‘the combination of local level (individual and community) and macro-level accounts of the use of s44 powers has resulted in Asian men feeling as though the perception of them as inherently suspicious has become normalised.’<sup>67</sup> In a study conducted by Human Rights Watch<sup>68</sup> it appears that 450,000 stops and searches under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 were conducted in the UK between April 2007 and April 2009. Allegedly ‘no one was successfully prosecuted for a terrorism offence as a result, and according to Britain’s independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, little if any useful intelligence about terrorist plots was obtained.’<sup>69</sup> Relying on sources such as the Metropolitan Police Authority, interviews with Lord Carlile (Independent Reviewer of Terrorism) and its own research (whose quality may vary), Human Rights Watch strongly criticizes stops and searches under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000. It alleges that powers were used improperly, in a discriminatory manner, without authorization, inconsistently and unlawfully. More generally, it argues that stop and search activities damaged community relations, problematized trust in the police (especially in London) and undermined confidence within Muslim communities. Moreover, it maintains that it is difficult to exactly quantify the

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<sup>63</sup> Arun Kundnani, *The Muslims are coming! Islamophobia, extremism, and the domestic war on terror* (London: Verso Books 2014); Stefano Bonino, ‘Prevent-ing Muslimness in Britain: the normalisation of exceptional measures to combat terrorism’, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 33, n. 3, 2013, 385–400; Stefano Bonino ‘Policing strategies against Islamic terrorism in the UK after 9/11: the socio-political realities for British Muslims’, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 32, n. 1, 2012, 5–31.

<sup>64</sup> Christina Pantazis and Simon Pemberton, ‘From the “old” to the “new” suspect community: examining the impacts of recent UK counter-terrorist legislation’, *British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 49, n. 5, 2009, 646–666.

<sup>65</sup> This power allows authorities to carry out stops and searches at airports without needing reasonable suspicion.

<sup>66</sup> This power allowed authorities to stop and search people in any location without needing any reasonable suspicion. It was repealed by the Terrorism Act 2000 (Remedial) Order 2011 so that the police could only stop and search if reasonable suspicion of potential involvement in a terrorist act was proven under Section 43. Eventually, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 scrapped Section 44 and replaced it with Section 47a, which requires a senior police officer to authorize stop and search upon reasonable suspicion that an act of terrorism will take place and that conducting stop and search will prevent it.

<sup>67</sup> Parmar, ‘Stop and search in London: counter-terrorist or counter-productive?’, *op. cit.*, 379.

<sup>68</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Without suspicion: stop and search under the Terrorism Act 2000* (New York: Human Rights Watch 2010).

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

number of Muslims who are stopped and their likelihood of being stopped compared to people of other religions because religion (unlike ethnicity) is not recorded during stops and searches.

The Scottish context appears to be rather different. A pre-9/11 study<sup>70</sup> found out that 3.6%, 7.4% and 2.9% of ethnic minorities were among those stopped and searched on streets by, respectively, Lothian and Borders Police, Strathclyde Police and Tayside Police, against a minority ethnic population of 4.1% in Edinburgh, 5.5% in Glasgow and 3.7% in Dundee in 2001.<sup>71</sup> These numbers and the response from the Scottish Executive<sup>72</sup> show that pre-9/11 street stops and searches were not a very high-profile issue and had not dramatically impacted on minority ethnic people other than in Glasgow. In this sense, although disproportionality – which is defined as ‘the extent to which searches of people from black and minority ethnic groups exceed that which would be expected given their share of the population’<sup>73</sup> – is highly problematic to measure, there is no strong evidence to support claims of police targeting of black and minority ethnic groups through stop and search activities in the pre-9/11 Scottish context. However, the report recognized anecdotal evidence that several young people, across different groups (black and minority ethnic and white), ‘appear alienated from the police, do not trust them, and feel that they are being harassed.’<sup>74</sup>

In the more recent times in the post-9/11 context, stops and searches on Scottish streets still seem not to target race and ethnicity per se. In fact, a study conducted by Murray<sup>75</sup> highlights the fact that, while in England and Wales they predominantly target ethnic minorities, stops and searches in Scotland are instead disproportionately directed towards young people ‘over and beyond the probability of offending.’<sup>76</sup> In the first three months of 2013/14, stops and searches conducted on black and ethnic minorities in Scotland accounted for 2.7% of the total stops and searches against a Scottish black and minority ethnic (BME) population of 3.7%.<sup>77</sup> Strathclyde Police<sup>78</sup> recorded an increasing number of

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<sup>70</sup> Scottish Executive, *Police stop and search among white and minority ethnic young people in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Scottish Executive 2002).

<sup>71</sup> Scottish Executive, *Analysis of ethnicity in the 2001 Census: summary report* (Edinburgh: Scottish Executive 2004).

<sup>72</sup> Scottish Executive, *Pride and prejudice: a review of police race relations in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Scottish Executive 2003).

<sup>73</sup> Scottish Executive, *Police stop and search among white and minority ethnic young people in Scotland*, *op. cit.*, ii.

<sup>74</sup> Scottish Executive, *Police stop and search among white and minority ethnic young people in Scotland*, *op. cit.*, iii.

<sup>75</sup> Kath Murray, ‘Stop and search in Scotland: an evaluation of police practice’, *SCCJR Report 01/2014*.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>77</sup> Police Scotland, *Keeping people safe through stop and search*. Report to the Scottish Police Authority, 2013, available online at <http://www.spa.police.uk/assets/126884/182522/182532> (viewed 12 April 2014).

overall stop and search activities from 2004 until 2011 but these did not disproportionately impact on Glaswegian BME groups. In fact, stops and searches conducted on BME groups accounted for 2.5% of all searches in 2011 against a BME population that was estimated at 8.1% of the total population in 2010.<sup>79</sup> In the wake of the Glasgow bombings, the same report recorded that only seventeen stops and searches had been conducted under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000.

The impact of anti-terror legislation at airports is difficult to quantify due to the fact that data on stops and searches, as conducted under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000, were not disclosed by three main Scottish Police forces (Lothian and Borders Police, Strathclyde Police and Tayside Police)<sup>80</sup> upon Freedom of Information requests submitted by the author in 2012. Although the airport context is rather patchy, the last part of this section and the next section will show that Edinburgh's Muslims have strong perceptions of being heavily targeted and discriminated against by security activities, which have silenced the negotiation of their identities and rights in interactions with police and security officers.<sup>81</sup> A public *Stop and Search Consultation Meeting* organized by Edinburgh and Lothian Regional Equality Council (ELREC), in partnership with Lothian and Borders Police and Edinburgh City Council in central Edinburgh in early December 2011 (the first such meeting was organized in 2008)<sup>82</sup> shed some light on the issue of airport stops and searches in Scotland. The meeting was generally aimed at giving voice to members of affected ethnic minority communities (not necessarily only those of Muslim faith) in order to understand the situation in Edinburgh and potentially develop good practices that better address the problematic over-policing of certain strata of the population under the current post-9/11 securitized social, political and legislative climate. It was chaired by a member of ELREC and included, as panel members, authorities from Lothian and Borders Police, the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament. In the audience there were around 30 or 40 people, mostly members of ethnic minorities, some of whom openly described themselves as Muslim. All of the panel members recognized that the practicalities

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<sup>78</sup> Strathclyde Police, *Chief Constable's annual report 2010/2011: statistical supplement* (Glasgow: Strathclyde Police 2011).

<sup>79</sup> Glasgow City Council, *Population and households by ethnicity in Glasgow: estimates of changes 2001–2010 for community planning partnership areas and neighbourhoods* (Glasgow: Glasgow City Council 2012).

<sup>80</sup> Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, these three police forces, the other five former regional police forces of Scotland (Central Scotland Police, Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary, Fife Constabulary, Grampian Police and Northern Constabulary) and the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency have become part of a single, national police force called 'Police Scotland'.

<sup>81</sup> Given that security is managed in partial cooperation between airport security personnel, the police and Special Branch, it is often hard to understand who exactly conducts stop and search activities.

<sup>82</sup> Similar events have also been organized in Glasgow.

of policing ethnic minorities had been problematized in the wake of 9/11. Schedule 7 had disproportionately impacted on certain communities in town and the South Asian community had been particularly stereotyped. However, they also argued that airports are key spaces for counter-terrorism activities and that Edinburgh Airport might appear to be over-policed because it is the busiest airport in Scotland and one of the busiest in Great Britain. All members of the panel seemed understanding of the issues that have affected South Asians and other ethnic minorities in Edinburgh; at least verbally, they showed an open attitude towards the shaping of better approaches to counterterrorism and security practices at airports.

A few Muslim men took the floor and expressed their anger, grievance and disillusion. In particular, these men recounted individual and collective experiences of being part of a 'suspect community' which had been subject to frequent stops and searches at Edinburgh Airport and had suffered from highly intrusive actions at the hands of police officers, who would often misuse their power (this includes allegations of private data held on laptops and mobile phones being copied into the police security system without any reason). These men voiced their distrust in the police and in the government too, possibly confirming the link between frequency of contact with the law enforcement agency and dissatisfaction with policing activities.<sup>83</sup>

Lack of communication with institutional community channels (e.g. mosques and other religious or social organizations) was also highlighted as an area that would require improvement. However, with regard to this last point, it should be pointed out that Lothian and Borders Police (now part of Police Scotland) in partnership with Edinburgh Council and the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce has organized an annual series of events called 'Edinburgh Community Resilience Week' since 2009. This week-long series of events include workshops,<sup>84</sup> a conference<sup>85</sup> and other events<sup>86</sup> for businessmen, private security officers and the general public and are aimed at both raising awareness of the overall British

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<sup>83</sup> Scottish Executive, *Police stop and search among white and minority ethnic young people in Scotland*, *op. cit.*

<sup>84</sup> For example 'Project Griffin', 'Project Argus' and 'Workshop to Raise Awareness or Prevent (WRAP)'. The latter was criticized by Leda Blackwood, Nick Hopkins and Steve Reicher 'Divided by a common language? Conceptualizing identity, discrimination, and alienation', in Kay Jonas and Thomas Morton (eds), *Restoring civil societies: the psychology of intervention and engagement following crisis* (Oxford: Wiley 2012), 222–236) for encouraging people with a duty of care, particularly those within the public sector, to recognize signs of vulnerability, especially in young Muslim males, and report them to the authorities. According to the authors, this process might further promote the targeting of Muslims and minority groups since professionals and authorities, no matter how well intentioned, could be perceived as discriminatory by those that come to their attention. More broadly, they argue that this process could isolate Muslims from the wider non-Muslim community and negatively impact the former's confidence in and cooperation with authorities.

<sup>85</sup> A 'National Security Conference'.

<sup>86</sup> For example, a simulated terrorist attack during which members of the public are invited to take the role of policemen in the decision-making and operational process of dealing with an imminent terrorist attack.

counterterrorist strategy and illustrating the role that these different stakeholders can play in order to prevent, protect and prepare their interests for any potential terrorist attack. The previous section also mentioned that, outside of airports, a number of interviewees found that the police (as well as politicians) had been rather active in making their presence positively visible at mosques through visits of courtesy, reassurance and/or protection.

In general, the *Stop and Search Consultation Meeting* hinted at the highly problematic and contested interactional social space of Edinburgh Airport; a space in which police and security officers maintain order and control often by, consciously or unconsciously, relying on power imbalanced strategies that negatively impact on ethnic minorities. A serious challenge to the local shaping of a democratic, equal and unthreatening security *locus*, the negative interactions between authorities and ethnic minorities risk to undermine the shaping of a Scottish project of local pluralism and diversity. In fact, the *Stop and Search Consultation Meeting* illustrated that decreased levels of confidence and trust in both the police (who are often conflated with airport security personnel) and, more broadly, the government are an obvious problem for the full inclusion of Muslims within the institutional, social and political Scottish fabric. The negative impact that stop and search practices have had on the confidence of Muslims in entering spaces of security, interacting with airport officers and having their own identities, liberties and rights respected and recognized was also a running theme within the body of Muslim interviewees. The next section will give a platform to their voices and emotions of discriminated diversity.

### **Targeted Muslimness at Scottish airports:<sup>87</sup> the emotions of discriminated diversity**

Stories of negative experiences of stop and search at Scottish airports abound among (predominantly) male respondents. Most Edinburgh's Muslims had either themselves experienced or had relatives and/or friends who were subjected to perceived undue targeting or harsh treatment when leaving from or arriving at Scottish airports. The most notable argument that participants put forward in explaining the nature of, and reason for, being stopped and searched at airports is the ethnic and religious profiling that the police and security officers allegedly carry out against people of seemingly Muslim appearance. As previously highlighted, Muslimness is stigmatized through those visible markers that

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<sup>87</sup> Muslim interviewees predominantly mentioned traveling through Edinburgh Airport but a few of them had also traveled through Glasgow International Airport.

Muslims display to (consciously or unconsciously) signify their affiliation with Islam. The whole concept of the operational randomness of stop and search activities was ferociously criticized by many interviewees, whose experiences suggested that security practices follow a very specific, far from random, logic. Such logic, they believe, especially targets Muslims *qua* Muslims and, in turn, reproduces social fears about their otherness:

I have never been stopped at the train station but I have been stopped and searched at the airport. It is always a 'random' [sarcastic] search. [...] Random search: how come I am always the one randomly stopped? (Babar, young Scottish Pakistani man in his mid-20s)

Stop and search at airports is a widespread issue. People are getting stopped. We get stopped. We see it ourselves. Not once but twice, three times. We see it a number of times and then we realize that it has become part of our life. The concern is the actual questioning and the perception that puts on other passengers on the same flight. People think that you are being stopped for a reason. (Nasir, Scottish Pakistani man in his early 30s)

Within the interactional social space that is constructed around the stigmatization of visible Muslimness, Muslims are placed in a position of unequal standing before police and security officers. These operate as the human tools of the post-9/11 socio-political securitization and discrimination against Islam and Muslims and, as Wacquant<sup>88</sup> would argue, represent the law and order right hand of the State, which employs penal means to deal with social 'problems'.

The broad effects that the securitization of Muslimness have produced on Muslim individuals and communities are manifold but, quite in line with the findings of Blackwood, Hopkins and Reicher,<sup>89</sup> all converge within a context of disempowerment, anger, humiliation, alienation and distrust towards security authorities and related institutions at this particular *locus* of stigmatization of visible Muslimness.<sup>90</sup> In Blackwood, Hopkins and Reicher's study, 'Muslim airport stories' are spread, shared and socially represented within Muslim communities. Such stories recount negative encounters with airport authorities that are

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<sup>88</sup> Loïc Wacquant, *Punishing the poor: the neoliberal government of social insecurity* (Durham: Duke University Press 2009).

<sup>89</sup> Leda Blackwood, Nick Hopkins and Steve Reicher, 'I know who I am, but who do they think I am? Muslim perspectives on encounters with airport authorities', *Journal of Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 36, n. 6, 2012, 1090–1108.

<sup>90</sup> A few interviewees were so suspicious of the far-reaching extent of the policing of Muslims to the point of guessing that the police had bugged the mosque where the interview was being conducted and employed Muslim spies to gather information on community members.

primarily characterized by interactions that place Muslims within a power imbalanced relational category in which: a) Muslim identities are misrepresented and misunderstood; b) for those who uphold them, Scottish or British national identities are partially denied, since Muslims are treated as social aliens; and c) ‘respectable identities’, which are based on high social status within the Muslim community, are not recognized by wider society. According to the authors, such three-fold identity denial impacts on both Muslims’ feelings and perceptions of their positions in society and their own actions. This process of identity misrecognition, which is the absence of others’ recognition of a person’s understanding of who s/he is<sup>91</sup> and which is triggered by the hyper-visibility of (stigmatized) Muslim identities,<sup>92</sup> hampers the way in which individuals can actually play out their Britishness / Scottishness and/or Muslimness during social interactions with police and airport authorities. A negative consequence of misrecognition is the mirroring back of ‘a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture’<sup>93</sup> to those whose identity is denied.

One of the most powerful accounts of the personal feelings of being subject to the securitization and stigmatization of visible Muslimness was offered by Chanda, who described her own emotional state in walking through airports as follows:

I feel as if I wanted to vanish. If I am at Edinburgh Airport, I feel so bad. Why me? I feel hundreds of thousands of pairs of eyes looking at me. This is very damaging sometimes. It is very scary, very upsetting. I feel very empty, very isolated, I feel like crying. It is such a bad feeling. (Chanda, Bangladeshi woman in her mid-40s)

Chanda’s feelings were shared by a few other interviewees and add up to the collective idea of airports as being highly detrimental social spaces for the understandings of one’s self and one’s positioning in society. It also illustrates the emotional barriers that hamper the negotiation of identities and rights in an equal relational fashion with security bodies. Another participant, Hamid, reported a very unpleasant experience in the airport interview room, where police officers allegedly abused their position of power to intimidate him to extract information that he did not possess. Hamid, who holds a British passport, was harassed and threatened with deportation to Pakistan. This is how he described his feelings of victimization during encounters with security at airports:

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<sup>91</sup> Charles Taylor, ‘The politics of recognition’, in Amy Guttmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism: examining the politics of recognition* (Princeton, Princeton University Press 1994), 25–73.

<sup>92</sup> Nick Hopkins and Leda Blackwood, ‘Everyday citizenship: identity and recognition’, *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, vol. 21, n. 3, 2011, 215–227.

<sup>93</sup> Taylor, ‘The politics of recognition’, *op. cit.*, 25.

Stop and search is a big issue at airports. It is really a big issue at airports. I would use the word ‘harassment’ because on a plane that has 200 people only those who have a beard or are Asians get stopped. I am using these words here deliberately: I use the word ‘harassment’ and I also use the word ‘victimisation’ because certain people are targeted. (Hamid, Pakistani man in his mid-50s)

Institutional mistrust as a consequence of the post-9/11 climate of political and military aggression towards certain Muslim countries, especially Afghanistan and Iraq, and the domestic over-policing of Muslims is particularly prevalent among male members of the community; thus, again, those who have had more contact with the police and security authorities. Hamid’s incident signals the dangerous potential for post-9/11 security practices to project the police and security authorities as dismissive of, if not oppositional to, Muslims’ belonging to the country and escalate tensions between members of the Muslim community and representatives of state power. In particular, overt abuse of power might reinforce a sense of perceived discrimination from, and increased hostility towards, the security *apparatus* within Muslim communities. The frustration, anger and humiliation suffered at airports prompted some respondents to opt for different travel arrangements:

I know of people that got fed up with travelling by air as a result of that. I think that initially it was far from random. (Ali, British Pakistani man in his mid-40s)

I have had so many bad experiences – and friends of mine too – at airports here in Scotland, both in Edinburgh and in Glasgow, that I do not even want to fly into Scottish airports anymore. I am serious. I will go to Manchester. I will go to wherever. London<sup>94</sup> is probably the easiest because there are so many different people coming in and they have to push them through. (Arif, Canadian Bangladeshi man in his early 30s)

The fact that a number of Muslim people ‘got fed up with travelling by air’ is not a myth but was confirmed by a few other research participants. This situation is framed within a general

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<sup>94</sup> Interestingly, Arif’s perception that airports other than Scottish ones, such as those in London, are ‘easier’ to travel to, clashes with the reality that the city of London (although not necessarily its airports too) bears the highest stop and search rate at 60 per 1000 people of all ethnic backgrounds in 2007/2008 as evidenced by a report published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, *Stop and think: a critical review of the use of stop and search powers in England and Wales*, 2010, available online at [http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/raceinbritain/ehrc\\_stop\\_and\\_search\\_report.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/raceinbritain/ehrc_stop_and_search_report.pdf) (viewed 10 April 2014).



context of negativity towards Scottish airports that led some Muslims to boycott Glasgow International Airport due to widespread perceptions of police and security personnel's ethnic profiling and discriminatory attitudes.<sup>95</sup> While the tensions between Muslims and the police have not exploded in episodes of violence as it happened in England,<sup>96</sup> it is still remarkable to notice that some members of the Scottish Muslim community decided to boycott one of Scotland's main airports as a result of the perceived negative, differential treatment compared to the white majority. If anything, this is further evidence that individual experiences of psychological, emotional and social distress and collective perceptions of disempowered Muslimness at airports problematize Muslims' sense of full inclusion in, and belonging to, Scottish socio-cultural structures. Fortunately though, such structures appear to be open and porous. As the next and final section will argue, provided that the securitization of visible Muslimness were to be reduced, Scotland and, in particular, Edinburgh could have the potential to include Muslim distinctiveness within a project of actualized local pluralism.

### **Beyond 'us' and 'them'? Mobilizing Scottishness, including Muslimness**

In an age of hostility and distrust towards the very essence of Muslimness, it is no surprise that the hyper-visibility of Muslims has triggered and facilitated discrimination on streets, at the workplace and at *loci* of security. Moreover, the emergence of scapegoats, upon which society can pour its fears and insecurities, is not a novel event. Jews in Nazi Germany, communists in the United States after the Second World War and gays in the 1980s played a role similar to the one that Muslims have played in the West since 9/11. A new way to 'unite a faltering civic society by invoking a common threat [...] and deflect attention away from the genuine causes of insecurity,'<sup>97</sup> the demonization of Muslims in the West and in Great Britain represents a historical continuum. This paper has illustrated the specific ways in which visibly displaying one's Muslim identity has negatively impacted on equally situated social interactions with some members of the Scottish community. *A priori* categorizations of Muslimness as discredited otherness have been employed by non-Muslims to ghettoize Muslims within a stigmatized ethno-religious diversity, remindful of Muslims' unequal standing in society. In particular, the power imbalanced relations with police and security

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<sup>95</sup> Alison Campsie and David Leask, 'Muslims boycott airport', *The Herald*, 13 July 2011.

<sup>96</sup> Shiv Malik, 'Muslim rioters say police discrimination motivated them', *The Guardian*, 8 December 2011.

<sup>97</sup> Barry Vaughan, 'The punitive consequences of consumer culture', *Punishment and Society*, vol. 4, n. 2, 2002, 195-211 (205).

officers at airports, which represent the symbolic and physical post-9/11 heavy-handed battle against Muslimness, have affected Muslims' social confidence and sense of belonging.

However, this study has also highlighted the generally positive Scottish environment in which Muslims live. While discrimination against ethno-religious minorities exists, the rates of racist incidents in Scotland are falling and racial prejudice is declining throughout Britain.<sup>98</sup> Perceptions of Scotland as a tolerant and welcoming country have been associated by Edinburgh's Muslims with their affiliation with Scottishness; such affiliation has increased across society since the 1970s at the expense of,<sup>99</sup> and has been played out against,<sup>100</sup> Britishness. The less ethnically fixed nature of Scottishness<sup>101</sup> compared to Englishness<sup>102</sup> and Scotland's 'aspirational pluralism'<sup>103</sup> can feed into the romantic and often political idea of a Scottish egalitarian and inclusive society.<sup>104</sup> Certainly, such an idea should not forget Scotland's tradition of racism, for example towards migrant labor<sup>105</sup> and, in particular, as generated and reproduced through the involvement in the Empire – a major theme in Scottish historiography recently and entailing a military, administrative and missionary presence in South Asia.<sup>106</sup> However, today's generally positive relations between Muslims and the majority of non-Muslim Scottish people bolster the notion of Scottish tolerance which finds evidence in the interest in Islam and in the support for Muslim causes that many people have demonstrated in Edinburgh. Not only a trigger for ethno-religious discrimination, the hyper-visibility of Muslimness in everyday Scottish life has also taken the shape of sentiments and actions of social inclusion within a city, Edinburgh, which has in itself the seeds to blossom as a local model of actualized pluralism. Today, Edinburgh and Scotland's challenge is to live up to their possibilities and, by both reducing the existing strain on, and valorizing, Muslim visible diversity, to mobilize their porous socio-cultural boundaries in the shaping of a fully integrative Scottishness.

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<sup>98</sup> Robert Ford, 'Is racial prejudice declining in Britain?', *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 59, n. 4, 2008, 609–636.

<sup>99</sup> Ross Bond and Michael Rosie, 'National identities in post-devolution Scotland', *Scottish Affairs* 40, Winter, 2002, 34–53.

<sup>100</sup> David McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: the sociology of a nation* (London: Routledge 2001, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.).

<sup>101</sup> Kyriakides, Virdee and Modood, 'Racism, Muslims and the national imagination', *op. cit.*

<sup>102</sup> The idea of English nationhood lies in ethnicity, race and whiteness. See Steve Fenton and Robin Mann, "'Our own people': ethnic majority orientations to nation and country', in Tariq Modood and John Salt (eds), *Global migration, ethnicity and Britishness* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2011), 225–247.

<sup>103</sup> Nasar Meer 'Looking up in Scotland? Multinationalism, multiculturalism and political elites', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 2015, vol. 38, n. 9, 1477–1496.

<sup>104</sup> David McCrone and Frank Bechhofer, 'Claiming national identity', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 33, n. 6, 2010, 921–948.

<sup>105</sup> Miles and Muirhead, 'Racism in Scotland', *op. cit.*

<sup>106</sup> Tom Devine, *The Scottish nation: 1700 to 2000* (London: Penguin Books 2012).